

SUMMARY

An intergeneric hybrid between a male Ring-necked Pheasant and a domestic fowl is described.

The occurrence of an associated mutation is described, and discussed in the light of the hormone control of growth and the resulting disturbance hybridisation has occasioned.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Dr. W. G. Storey very kindly prepared and reported upon the histological material, which included the vital slide confirming the anatomical sex of the bird as a female, and for slides of other organs which determined its death from the widespread fatty degeneration.

My thanks are also due to Dr. Pamela Harrison for the photograph of the prepared skin. Discussion with and comments by Dr. Jeffery Harrison are again acknowledged with gratitude.

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The status of *Monticola pretoriae* Gunning and Roberts, 1911

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Monticola pretoriae Gunning and Roberts, 1911: Pretoria, Transvaal was proposed as specifically distinct from *Monticola brevipes* (Waterhouse), 1838: 'Tans Mt., near Walvis Bay, South-West Africa, in having the top of the head uniform slate-blue, with no white eyebrow, and the outer edge of the outermost rectrix with a more extensive brown mark. Until very recently, *pretoriae* has received little or no support from other workers. Roberts himself (1940), placed it as a synonym of *M. b. leucocapilla* (Lafresnaye), 1852: no locality, following Bangs (1930), which view was adopted by Vincent (1952) and Clancey (1966); Ripley (1964), on the other hand, placed it in the synonymy of *M. b. brevipes*. Other recent authors, including McLachlan and Liversidge (1957), Mackworth-Præd and Grant (1963), *inter al.*, have denied the existence of subspecifically significant variation in the Short-toed Rock-thrush. Very recently, Farkas (1966) resuscitated *pretoriae* as a form specifically discrete from *M. brevipes*, in so doing considering Lafresnaye's *leucocapilla* a synonym of *brevipes* and not an earlier name for *pretoriae*. In treating *pretoriae* as a full species, Farkas has already been followed by White (1967) and other workers. As it is clear that the *pretoriae* of Farkas is simply the *leucocapilla* of Bangs, Roberts (1940), Clancey and Ripley, I have gone into this question afresh with the pooled specimen resources of both the Transvaal and Durban Museums in an endeavour to ascertain its true status.

At the outset it may be stated that *M. pretoriae* is simply a well-marked

race of *M. brevipes*, and there can be no question of according it independent specific status. The male of *M. b. pretoriae* differs from that of the nominate race in having the top of the head, nape and hind neck coloured like the mantle and scapulars. The feathers of these parts are not greyish-white over the basal three-quarters, only the tips bluish-grey (in nominate *M. brevipes* the wearing off of the blue-grey apices to the feathers results in the form assuming a white dorsal surface to the head, nape and hind neck in worn dress), which tipping and the mantle and scapulars are more brownish tinged, less clear blue-grey (Mouse Gray [Ridgway (1912)], as against Deep Neutral Gray). Face more or less plain mousy grey, not black, over the lores and auriculars sharply contrasted against the head-top as in *M. b. brevipes*. Below, with grey of throat paler, and orange of rest of ventral surface a little more saturated. In the wings somewhat paler and browner, less black, and the pale feather edges buffy rather than white. Tail darker. In the case of the female, *M. b. pretoriae* is darker and browner, less greyish over the upperparts; face also darker. Below, with the throat and lateral neck surfaces more heavily clouded and streaked with brown, the white mesial streak over the fore-throat laterally constricted, and the rest of the underside is more saturated and ochraceous, the dusky speckling heavier.

There appears to be little in the nature of a valid size difference between *M. b. brevipes* and *M. b. pretoriae*, though the former ranges larger in size (wings of ♂♂ 103–108, as against 100–105 in *pretoriae*), and the bill is a trifle longer: 24–27+, compared with 25–26 mm. in ♂♂ of *pretoriae*.

That *pretoriae* is no more than a race of *brevipes* is confirmed by two ♂♂ intergrades from the Kuruman district of the northern Cape in the Durban Museum. Another ♂ examined from Kosterfontein, Transvaal, well within the range of *pretoriae*, shows the influence of nominate *brevipes* in that some of the head-top feathers are greyish-white sub-apically. The range of *pretoriae* is from Griqualand West to the Orange Free State, and the highveld of the Transvaal (north to about Tzaneen). It has also been recorded from Stegi, in the Lebombo Mountains of Swaziland, but not from Natal, *contra* White (1967). This range agrees more or less exactly (with the exclusion of all reference to Botswana) to that given for *M. b. leucocapilla* by Roberts, Clancey and Ripley, *loc. cit.*, the status of which name must now be resolved.

Petrocinela (sic!) leucocapilla Lafresnaye, 1852: no locality but = "Afr. Mer. Betzonanas", *vide* Bangs, *loc. cit.*, which = Bechuanaland, according to Vincent (1952). The Short-toed Rock-thrush has only been recorded from Tshabong and Gaberones in the former Bechuanaland Protectorate (now Botswana) according to Smithers (1964) and Winterbottom (1966), but occurs commonly immediately to the south of that territory in the Bechuanaland district of the northern Cape. The type-locality can be localised in this region, and I here formally propose

north of Kuruman, northern Cape,

as the restricted type-locality of *P. leucocapilla* Lafresnaye, 1852, which name is now lodged in the synonymy of *M. b. brevipes* (Waterhouse), 1838. One would expect that the name *leucocapilla*, white-capped, could only have been applied in the first instance to an example of nominate *M. brevipes* in worn plumage and not to one from the south-eastern populations of dark-headed birds (*pretoriae*), but Bangs informs us that the

type is not white-headed. It is probably in freshly moulted dress, in which case the white dorsal surface of the head and neck in *M. b. brevipes* would be obscured by the blue-grey apices to the new feathers. Also by formally restricting the type-locality of *leucocapilla* to the northern Cape districts lying to the north of Kuruman, the name is associated with the western rather than the south-eastern populations.

The status of *M. b. kaokensis* Macdonald, 1957: Kamanjab, north-western South-West Africa, is highly equivocal, and most recent workers have placed it in the synonymy of *M. b. brevipes*, the sole major exception being Traylor (1963), who used the name for the populations occurring along the arid coast of south-western Angola. White (1962) accepted the stated race, but later (1967) referred it to the synonymy of *brevipes*. 'Tans Mountain, near Walvis Bay (the type-locality of *brevipes*) and Kamanjab (the type-locality of *kaokensis*) both lie in much the same low rainfall region of north-western South-West Africa, and are most unlikely to support discrete races of a bird such as a rock-thrush, which is not overtly plastic. This view is confirmed by the work of others. Judging by Winterbottoms' comments (1964; 1966) on *kaokensis* topotypes, this name is correctly placed as a synonym of *M. b. brevipes*, in which case a new name is required for the Angola coastal birds if they do in fact show good characters of their own.

Currently, *M. brevipes* should be admitted as having two races: nominate *brevipes* and *pretoriae*, with the names *leucocapilla* and *kaokensis* placed as synonyms of the former. *M. pretoriae* is not specifically discrete from *M. brevipes*, the opinion of Farkas notwithstanding.

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